CLAIMS

1. Use of an aqueous antimicrobial preservation composition for eliminating or reducing the microbial content of a microbially contaminated separation matrix, which is to be used in a housing of a separation device, wherein said composition comprises at least one alkyl paraben.

2. Use as in claim 1, wherein said at least one alkyl paraben is methyl paraben, ethyl paraben, propyl paraben, or butyl paraben.

3. Use as in claim 1 or 2, wherein the concentration of said at least one alkyl paraben decreases with increasing alkyl number.

4. Use as in claim 2 or 3, wherein the concentration of methyl paraben is between 0.5 and 2 $g \cdot l^{-1}$.

5. Use as in claim 2 or 3, wherein the concentration of ethyl paraben is between 0.01 and 0.5 $g \cdot l^{-1}$.

6. Use as in claim 2 or 3, wherein the concentration of propyl paraben is between 0.25 and 0.25 $g \cdot l^{-1}$.

7. Use as in claim 2 or 3, wherein the concentration of butyl paraben is at least 0.002 $g \cdot l^{-1}$.

8. Use as in any of claims 1-7, wherein said aqueous antimicrobial preservation composition further comprises a solubility increasing agent at a concentration that is sufficient to maintain said at least one alkyl paraben in solution.

9. Use as in claim 8, wherein said solubility increasing agent is propylene glycol.

10. Use as in claim 9, wherein the concentration of said propylene glycol is not more than 20 $g \cdot l^{-1}$.

11. A method of producing a separation matrix with eliminated or reduced microbial content, the method comprising the steps of

providing said separation matrix, microbially contaminated, in a housing or container;

adding an aqueous antimicrobial preservation composition, which comprises at least one alkyl paraben, to said separation matrix in said housing or container;

allowing said aqueous antimicrobial preservation composition to exert its effect in said housing or container until the number of colony forming units (CFU) per g preservative composition is sufficiently reduced; and

rinsing said aqueous antimicrobial preservation composition from said housing or container.

12. The method as in claim 11, wherein said at least one alkyl paraben is methyl paraben, ethyl paraben, propyl paraben, or butyl paraben.

13. The method as in claim 11 or 12, wherein the concentration said at least one alkyl paraben decreases with increasing alkyl number.

14. The method as in claim 12 or 13, wherein the concentration of methyl paraben is between 0.5 and 2 $g \cdot l^{-1}$.

15. The method as in claim 12 or 13, wherein the concentration of ethyl paraben is between 0.01 and 0.5 $g \cdot l^{-1}$.

16. The method as in claim 12 or 13, wherein the concentration of propyl paraben is between 0.25 and 0.25 $g \cdot l^{-1}$.

17. The method as in claim 12 or 13, wherein the concentration of butyl paraben is at least 0.002 $g \cdot l^{-1}$.

18. The method as in any of claims 11-17, wherein said aqueous antimicrobial preservation composition further comprises a solubility increasing agent at a concentration that is sufficient to maintain said at least one alkyl paraben in solution.

19. The method as in claim 18, wherein said solubility increasing agent is propylene glycol.

20. The method as in claim 9, wherein the concentration of said propylene glycol is not more than 20 $g \cdot l^{-1}$.

21. The method as in any of claims 11-20, wherein said aqueous antimicrobial preservation composition is sterilized before it is added to said separation matrix.

22. The method as in claim 21, wherein said aqueous antimicrobial preservation composition is sterilized by means of steam or filter sterilization.

23. The method as in any of claims 11-22, wherein said aqueous antimicrobial preservation composition is allowed to exert its effect for at least 6 h.

24. The method as in any of claims 11-23, wherein said aqueous antimicrobial preservation composition is allowed to exert its effect until US and/or European pharmacopeia test protocol is fulfilled.